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C O N F I D E N T I A L TBILISI 003198

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/09/2015

TAGS: PREL PGOV GG

SUBJECT: TENSIONS RISING IN SOUTH OSSETIA

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) On December 2, the South Ossetian press reported that a checkpoint on the road to the Ossetian village of Zari was hit by fire from a grenade launcher. Later press reports from South Ossetia claimed that Georgian special police forces attacked a bus traveling along a bypass road leading from Tskhinvali. No casualties were reported.

12. (C) Poloff spoke with OSCE Political Officer Jurgen Schmidt, who said JPKF and OSCE observers determined that the reported explosion was the result of an accidental land mine detonation along a bypass road leading from Tskhinvali to the village of Java. Schmidt said South Ossetians were spreading propaganda, there was no indication that an attack took place.

TEFFT